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A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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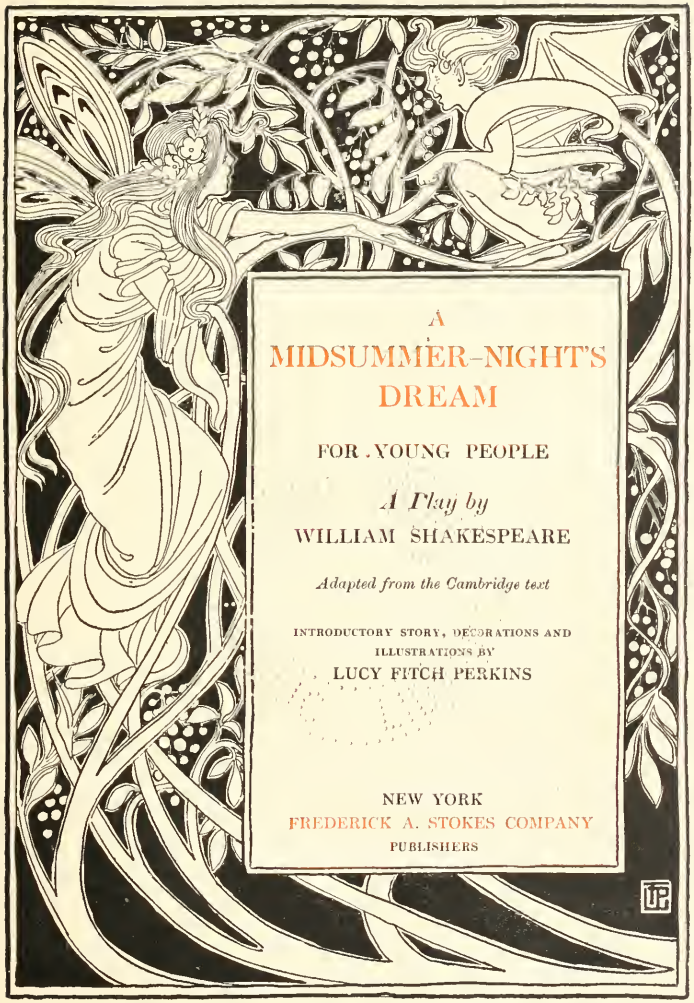
A MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S DREAM
A PLAY BY
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

TITANIA AND THE CHANGELING

SHE never had so sweet a Changeling.
Act II, Scene i



A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A Play by

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Adapted from the Cambridge text

INTRODUCTORY STORY, DECORATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY

LUCY FITCH PERKINS

NEW YORK
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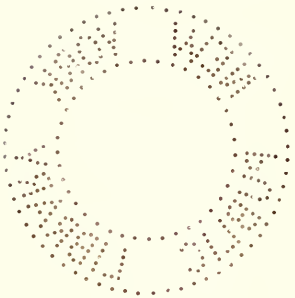

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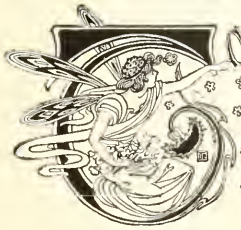


TO·MRS·CHARLES·HITCHCOCK·
·these drawings are inscribed
·with grateful affection·

These are patricians of the city of Athens who appear in this play.

PETER QUINCE

BOTTOM

FLUTE

MOONSHINE

SNOUT

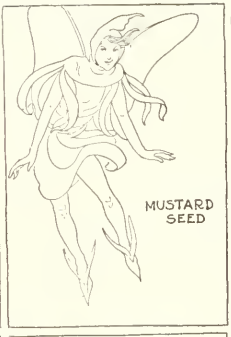
SNUG

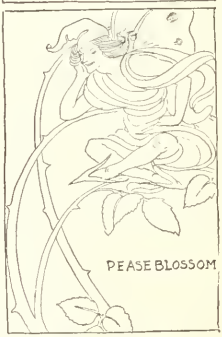
These are the workmen of Athens as they appeared before Theseus and Hippolyta in the lamentable comedy of PYRAMUS and Thisbe

STARVELING

These are the names of the actors.

Peter Quince a carpenter.
Nick Bottom a weaver.
Francis Flute a bellows mender
Robin Starveling a tailor.
Tom Snout a tinker.
Snug the Joiner.
and Moonshine





These are the Fairy folk.
Oberon, king of the fairies
Titania, his Queen.
Peaseblossom
Cobweb
Mustard seed
Moth
and other fairies
Puck, or Robin Goodfellow

IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAY

IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAY

I

IT was nearly noon of a clear day in December, 1594, that a mud-bespattered carrier's cart turned heavily from the centre of the main thoroughfare of St. Bridget's parish, London, and came to a stop in front of a small shop before which a haberdasher's sign swung to and fro in the wind.

The cart had evidently come a long distance, for it was covered with mud, the horses were tired, and the face of the burly driver was beef red with buffeting against the wind, while the cheeks of the fifteen-year-old boy who sat beside him glowed with such roses as are to be found only in the faces of the lads and lassies of Merry England out of all the world. As the cart halted, the carrier climbed stiffly down from his seat, covered the steaming horses with pieces of rough cloth, and taking some grain from the back of the cart prepared to give them their noon meal.

Meanwhile the boy sat still, quite unconscious of the movements of the carrier, gazing with wide eyes and parted lips at the people passing in the streets, at the rows of curious little shops, or at old St. Paul's in the distance, with the wonder of one to whom all these sights

London but long enough to purchase my stores and rest my horses, and then away for Stratford! Edmund is to return with me on my next trip — that is, if I do not meanwhile die of starvation," he ended, with a plaintive hand spread over a plump waistcoat.

"Be patient but a moment," said Gilbert, "and thou shalt be fed, upon mine honour. Let me but sell the saffron hose and I am with thee."

The carrier rolled an expressive eye at Edmund, as the haberdasher returned to his customer with profuse apologies for neglecting him. "Your pardon, honourable sir, for this delay," said he. "My young brother gave me such a turn that I for the moment forgot my privilege of showing you these fine hose. Ah, sir, these are the hose to set off a well-turned leg like thine; but I have other colors also, if thou wilt see them?"

"Nay," said the cavalier, good humouredly, "no need for either apology or flattery. I have been well entertained the while. I 'll take only the saffron hose to-day, — but tell me, art thou truly related to Will Shakespeare, whose plays delight the Queen herself?"

"He is indeed my brother," said Gilbert, proudly, "and all his honours he digests as easily as" — "as I could digest a dinner, an' I had one," groaned old Greenway in an audible aside to Edmund. "Come, lad, let us find a dinner for ourselves, and Gilbert shall join us when he has finished with the saffron hose. What are such fripperies to men in our condition? I tell thee plainly, unless I eat soon I am not long for this world."

"Thou shalt not perish on my account," laughed the cavalier, turning toward old Greenway and taking a gold piece from his purse. "Here, Gilbert, is the money for the saffron hose. Take it, and buy them the best dish of toasted cheese to be had in London and plenty of good English ale to wash all down, and know that when I need other hose for my well-turned legs I shall get

them of Will Shakespeare's brother, for Will hath surely the sweetest wit in all England."

"Thou hast indeed saved us from being cut off in our youth," said old Greenway, thankfully, bobbing Edmund's head forward by means of a discreet push from behind, and bowing himself as low as his girth permitted as Gilbert opened the door for the cavalier to pass out. The little shop door was then closed, and the three sallied forth in search of a tavern, Edmund singing gaily "Three merry men, and three merry men, and three merry men be we" all the way down the street, and even until they were comfortably seated at a table near a roasting fire, waiting for their cheese and ale.

What valiant trencherмen they proved themselves on this occasion I shall not venture to tell, for Gilbert plied them with food until even the carrier declared himself satisfied, and Edmund said he could walk over all London on the strength of his dinner. Then they returned to the cart, and Gilbert and Edmund watched the carrier drive away alone in the direction of old St. Paul's.

"Now," said Gilbert to Edmund, "thou must be thine own guide for a time, for I must stay by my shop. Mind thy direction, and do not go too far away, and at four o'clock we will set forth for Southwark to find Will."

In the next two hours Edmund saw more sights than he had seen in all his fifteen years of life before. There were gay equipages driving by in the streets, while brilliantly dressed cavaliers pranced back and forth on horseback. The broad river was alive with craft of all kinds, and the shops displayed such a wonderful variety of strange things that the country boy found endless delight in gazing. When Bow bells chimed the hour of four, however, he was once more at Gilbert's door, and found his brother ready for their walk to Southwark, which lay on the opposite bank of the Thames.

"We 'll cross by way of London bridge," said Gilbert,

" for it is one of the sights of the city, and cheaper than the ferry. We shall be in good season if we reach Southwark by five, for the play will not be over until about that time, and we can sup with Will and perhaps see some of his fine friends at the Tabard Inn. I tell thee, Edmund, thou must mind thy manners, for the greatest wits in the kingdom seek his company, and 't is said he hath friends even among the peers of the realm! What dost thou say to that? "

" Marry, that he is our Will for all that," said Edmund, stoutly. " Would n't mother and Anne be proud to see him among his fine friends? And as for Suzanne and Judith, they are always telling me that I am naught but his brother, while they are his very own daughters, and so nearer of kin! All Stratford hath great pride in him, but these girls take on such peacock airs that I am forced sometimes to put them down for their soul's good! It seems a pity that since fortune made me their uncle it could not at the same time have made me of greater age, for they pay but small heed to my counsel."

" Thou art a rare spiritual guide, I 'll warrant," laughed Gilbert. " To have Will for a father and thee for an uncle is enough to turn the head of any girl, — but 't is time now to forget thy virtues and look about thee. This is London bridge. Didst ever play with the girls at home ' London bridge is falling down, dance o'er my Lady Lee '? The Lee joins the Thames beyond here and that gave rise to the song."

" As if I would play girls' games! " sniffed Edmund.

" They 'll make thee play their games in time, lad, be sure," said Gilbert, darkly, " so be less cocky. 'T will become thee better. Dost know, Edmund, some of the people who live in the houses that are built along both sides of it have never been off this bridge in all their lives? They stay right here in this dark, narrow street and watch the world pass by. They are many of them

cut-throats and thieves, what 's more, so 't is as well to cross by daylight and in good company."

"Did they never see a budding orchard in the spring, nor hear a skylark sing on a summer morning?" said Edmund, as if these sights were more to him than any London had to offer.

"Not they," said Gilbert, "but they love this life as Will loves the country. If they go away from it they miss the smell of the river and the noise of traffic, and the busy throngs, and are homesick to get back again, just as he longs for Stratford meadows."

"There may be birds that love their cage," said Edmund, "but how can any one like this better than the smell of the earth and the sight of green fields with flowers blowing in them? They are a strange folk."

"They are born to this lot," Gilbert answered, "and that makes a world of difference; but look you thro' this opening — dost see that great wall yonder with the Castle rising from the hill within it? That is the Tower of London, and I tell thee, lad, there have been many people within those walls, and of good blood too, who would gladly have changed places with the meanest on this bridge if they might have their freedom too. The Queen is not in the Palace now — she holds her Christmas revels at Greenwich this year. They say she has little love for this old pile, for she was once a prisoner there herself, and does not forget it. There is the water gate — which she passed through as a captive. I 'll warrant she saw many a head fall on Tower Hill in Mary's reign, for Protestant heads fell there like ripe apples in a gale of wind. England may well thank God for Queen Bess," and Gilbert reverently bared his head.

"I 'm glad I did n't live then," said Edmund with conviction. "But who are all these people coming from the other end of the bridge, Gilbert?" "The play is over, and these are Londoners on their way home from

the Theatre. That handsome young man on horseback, followed by his servants, is the Earl of Pembroke — he is a great friend of Will's, I 'm told, and yonder is another of his acquaintance — Ben Jonson, the poet. Hurry, lad — thou canst not stand still to watch them or we shall be too late for Will. If we hasten we shall catch him as he goes to his supper." "And the best of all good times to catch him too, say I," was Edmund's response; "I 'm as hungry as a wolf. Every man to his trade, and eating is mine." "Thou showest excellent zeal in the pursuit of it," Gilbert admitted — "not every boy of fifteen could hold so much."

"'T is practice does it," said Edmund, complacently, as he hastened his steps; and a few moments more of brisk walking brought them to the door of the Tabard Inn.

Edmund sniffed the savory breeze that issued from the door with the air of a connoisseur. "Good roast beef for one thing," he pronounced — "'t will answer my purpose well. Let 's go in, Gilbert, and see if Will has come. We can at least smell the cooking as we wait." They slipped into the tap room with a number of other comers, and peering about the dimly lighted interior saw in the farthest corner of the room a group of men standing together about an oaken table.

The late afternoon light, shining through the latticed window, fell dimly upon their faces as the men listened with eager attention to something that one of their number — a man of middle height with a grave, kind face — was saying. "There he is," whispered Gilbert, pinching Edmund's arm — "dost see Will? He is speaking to the others and they hang upon his words even as I did when we were boys together, and he used to frighten sleep from mine eyes with his tales of fairies and goblins after we had gone to bed! I wish he would speak louder." "Whatever he says, 't is something they like

to hear," answered Edmund. "See how well pleased they look!"

As the low murmur of the speaker's voice ceased his audience broke into a clamour of delight — "To play in the Christmas revels before the Queen," shouted one ecstatically — "this shows that her Majesty's Master of the Revels is indeed a man of sense. I had not thought so well of Master Tylney!" "Listen, brothers" — shouted another as he hugged himself and cut a caper. "What sayeth bully Bottom! Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps, meet presently at the palace, for the short and the long is — our play is preferred."

"Leave thy nonsense for the stage, Phillips," said a taller man with a pointed beard, as he seized a tankard from the table, and lifting it in the air, shouted, "I give you the Queen. God bless her!"

The others seized theirs with like enthusiasm, and drank the toast with their hands upon the hilts of their swords. When they had finished, the tall man again lifted his tankard, crying, "and after the Queen I give you her Majesty's most distinguished playwright — Will Shakespeare!" "Will! Will!" shouted the men in chorus — "here 's to thee," and drank again, buffeting Will affectionately on the back as they did so.

"They drink his health as tho' he were a prince, tho' more familiarly," said Edmund in an awe-stricken whisper. "Are they all dukes and lords, Gilbert, think you?" "Nay, simpleton," said Gilbert with superior scorn — "they are but some of the Lord Chamberlain's players. The man who gave the toasts is Richard Burbage, the manager and chief actor in the company. The funny man is the clown, Augustus Phillips, and two of the others, Heminge and Condell, I have seen on the stage. They are great friends of Will's." The men had

seated themselves at the table, and Burbage's voice rose again above the clatter.

"At Greenwich for the Christmas revels before the Queen! was there ever such luck! And to think we have been rehearsing thy new play, Will, for this — without ever knowing it! If it pleases the Queen thou hast made all our fortunes! Why, man, when she sees the Fairy Queen in love with an ass I 'll warrant she 'll say 't is the merriest conceit ever shown on the stage."

"Thou art ever a partial critic, Diccon," said Will, speaking for the first time so that his voice reached the ears of Gilbert and Edmund — "and it is surely good fortune as thou sayest, that the play is so well prepared, for the time would be but short for new plans if we had not this ready to hand. It needs but a few touches by way of compliment to the Queen's Majesty. That speech for Oberon's mouth shall hit its mark if I miss not my aim. Dost recall the lines, Diccon?" and he declaimed:

> "A certain aim he took
> At a fair Vestal, throned in the West,
> And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
> And the imperial Votaress passes on
> In maiden meditation fancy free."

"Ah, Will, thou art a very magician with words," sighed Diccon.

"No woman, tho' a Queen, could resist such compliments as thine," said Heminge.

"There 's one thing to trouble us," spoke up another — a fresh-faced youth, younger than the rest. "Dost remember the lad who takes the part of the second fairy in Titania's train? He went home sick with fever this morning, and will surely not be well in time for the Christmas revels, for 't is now the evening of the 22nd. We must find another lad for the part."

"Gilbert," said Edmund, "shall we stand here all the evening listening to their talk, with never a bite nor sup for ourselves? Why dost thou not speak to him?"

"Go thou," said Gilbert. "Thou art the younger, and 't is fitting thou shouldst speak thine errand thyself."

"Not so," said Edmund; "thou art the elder and should have precedence." "Let us send the boy who serves to announce us, then," said Gilbert; "for to say the truth we are both a little shy of presenting ourselves before all this company. Here, boy" — to the drawer — "commend us to Master Shakespeare, and say that his brothers Gilbert and Edmund would speak with him."

The serving boy ran to the table and whispered in the ear of the playwright. Master Shakespeare rose quickly, searching the room with his eyes; and when he discovered his brothers, came forward with a hand outstretched to each — "Gilbert, thou art no stranger," he said cordially; "but Edmund — thou art as unexpected as a snowstorm in May, and far more welcome! What brings thee from Stratford? Not evil tidings, surely? Are all well at home?"

"As well and hale as any in England," Edmund answered. "Mother and Anne and Aunt Joan and the girls all sent thee many messages; I have come to London in old Greenway's cart to spend the Christmas holiday with thee and Gilbert, and to see thee play." "Thou shalt not only see me play," answered the master, observing the lad keenly, as if struck by a sudden idea, "but perchance shalt play thyself, and that before the Queen! What sayest thou to that?" and he threw an arm over Edmund's shoulder, and beckoning to Gilbert led the way back to the table.

"Look here, Diccon, and the rest of you," he said gaily as he approached, "these are my brothers — Gilbert and Edmund. They are excellent good fellows both, and will dine with us. What think you gossips —

is not the lad sent by fortune herself to take the place of the sick boy? Thou seest the roses in his cheeks — he 'll make a pretty lass without the help of paint. And, moreover, he hath a sweet breath for singing! The part is but small, and I will train him myself."

"The very thing," cried the youth who had first spoken. "Sit beside me, Edmund, for I am Titania in the play, and thou shouldst rightly be in my train! Make room for Gilbert between thee and Will, Diccon, and we 'll give them the fairy chorus to try his voice before he eats! Now — all together" — and the company good-naturedly burst into the chorus:

"Philomel, with Melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;"

Edmund was too much dazed with the sudden manner of his adoption into the company to be able to fix his attention on the music at first, but the song was so contagious and spirited that he and Gilbert both soon found themselves beating time and singing with the others,

"Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night, with lullaby."

"Gently, gently, all of you," laughed Will at the end of the second time through. "Thy lullaby would waken the seven sleepers! Thou art fairies, remember, and should sing small. Now once more — and with moderation!"

"The boy hath indeed a silvery pipe," said Titania, "and will serve excellently; that his name is Shakespeare is assurance for that!"

"And what says the lad himself?" said Will, kindly. "Wouldst like to see the Queen and play with the Lord Chamberlain's own men at the Palace? If so, thou hast but to say the word!"

"I will not be so bold as to refuse if thou art persuaded I can do it; but I tell thee, Will, my knees smite together at the thought of it," said Edmund. "'T will not show beneath thy robes," said Will, gaily. "So the matter is settled, and now thou shalt eat thy fill. Drawer — two trenchers and tankards for my brothers, and see that thou fill them well."

II

That night Gilbert returned alone to his haberdashery shop, leaving Edmund with Will. The boy was so tired with his long journey and the excitement of the day that he could scarcely stay awake long enough when they were alone after supper to answer his brother's many questions about the family and friends at Stratford; and when at last he was offered a bed in Will's room at the Tabard Inn he fell asleep at once and knew nothing more until morning. When he awoke the sun was streaming in at an eastern window, and Will was sitting up in bed, writing busily and smoking a pipe. Tobacco had only recently been brought to England by Sir Walter Raleigh from the wonderful new world across the sea; and Edmund had never heard of it, so when he saw the smoke curling from his brother's lips he was alarmed, and springing up, cried out — "Will — Will — how shall I put thee out? Thou art burning!" Will took the pipe from his mouth and laughed immoderately. "Thou art as green as Sir Walter's own servant," he said. "Some day thou wilt burn in the same way thyself, doubtless, and yet not be consumed — except with a desire for more," and he blew a ring in the air. "Judging by thy sleep," he went on merrily, "thou hast kept a good conscience. I have had my breakfast without disturbing thee, and now when thou art ready thou shalt have thine. The boy shall bring it up, and

then I will read thee the play, for the time is but short for thee to prepare thy part. Now let me burn in peace until thou art ready."

Edmund was too hungry to waste words about a matter he did not understand. He had already discovered that London was full of such, so he dressed quickly, and warmed himself by a run to the pump in the inn yard and a cold splash which set the roses blooming in his cheeks again. When he returned he found a well-filled wooden trencher awaiting him, and disposed of its contents in such a brief space of time that Will, watching him, said, laughingly, "If thou canst learn thy part with equal dispatch, brother, thou wilt put us all to shame! Now give me thine ears. Hast even seen a play?" "Marry have I," responded Edmund, glad to appear well informed on some subject: "when I was but seven I saw my lord of Leicester's own men play at Stratford. I cannot tell the name of it now, but there was a deal of killing it in, and 't was a right merry play." "It must have been merry indeed," said Will, "and by the same standard I fear this one will be but dull: for were it not that one clown is slain by a lion and another for love not a drop of blood would be shed in the whole piece. Yet the desperate character of these deaths should atone for their scarcity, and there 's plenty of quarrelling to fill the measure — what think you?"

Edmund considered the matter. "Perhaps 't is as well to let it pass at high words," he concluded, "for every one knows stage killing is no better than a pretense. I knew that when I was but seven, for I saw some of the knights who met bloody deaths on the stage walking about the Inn yard afterward in lusty health."

"Just mine own thought," said Will, solemnly: "and to make the matter more clear it is fully set forth in the play that the lion is no worse beast than a man in lion's clothing. 'T is a Christian device to save the blood-

thirsty instincts of the audience." "I should think so truly," said Edmund, heartily; "and I cannot think why it is when such care is used, lest virtue be offended, that the Puritans should so object to the playhouse." "Nor I," said Will, his eyes twinkling, "unless, perchance, all playwrights are not so exemplary; but thou shalt judge for thyself," and he began to read.

The morning flew by in the study of the play. Will took great pains with Edmund, teaching him the few words of his part, and picturing scene after scene of the play, that he might the more clearly grasp the spirit of the whole.

"Remember, thou art a fairy — nothing less," he charged him; "thy motions must be as light as thistle down. Now, let me see thee run and leap upon the bed as tho' thou hadst wings indeed — and were quite independent of thy legs. Well done, lad! a little more like leap frog than like wings, possibly, but very well for a beginning. Now, let us have thy song." Singing was as natural to Edmund as to the throstle in spring, and Will was so well pleased with his memory of the fairy song, that when he came to the chorus for the second time he joined in with his own voice, and both were so intent upon the singing that the boy from below stairs had to knock twice at their door to summon them to dinner.

"Thou hast done a good morning's work," said Will to Edmund, later, as they rose from the table in the Inn and looked out of the window; "and now thou shalt go with me to the play. See, the flags and banners are streaming from the Theatre so the people on the other side of the Thames can see them and know that there is to be a play. Get thyself ready in a twinkling lest we be late, for my cue comes early."

Edmund was soon ready, and they set forth in such good season that it was possible for them to glance, in

passing, at Paris Garden, where the bear baiting was; but Edmund had little desire to see that cruel sport. When they reached the playhouse Will found a good place for Edmund, and then left him to himself, while he hastened to the tiring room to get ready for his part.

That afternoon was to Edmund like a wonderful dream. To see a play in a real theatre, to see Will himself upon the stage, to recognize beneath the paint and in their alien characters the men whom he had met familiarly at supper the night before, to watch the dandies as they seated themselves upon the stage, the better to be seen and admired by the audience, to see the richly dressed ladies in their galleries, each wearing a black mask over the upper part of her face, and to hear the shouts and jokes of the poorer people in the pit, — all these things were to him experiences almost surpassing the bounds of imagination.

After the play he supped again with Will and his friends — this time at The Falcon — where all the wits of London were accustomed to gather, and heard such table talk and such jests that he almost forgot to eat, but sat listening like a visitor from another world. He tried to remember Stratford, and the simple homely life he was accustomed to there. He could bring it no nearer than a dream — this, this was life indeed! Here there was something to interest one every moment of the day, — new things to see, new people to meet, and an atmosphere of gaiety so infectious that he wondered if any one could ever tire of it. He marveled that Will should talk of returning to Stratford to live again the uneventful life of rural England. He even forgot for a moment his own love for the fields and roads, and felt that the town was the only place for a lad of spirit who wished to see the world.

Christmas was already in the air. The landlord's face took on a more ruddy hue as he plied his guests with ale,

cracked jokes with old acquaintances, thumped the drawers with his fist to make them fly the faster in attendance upon his patrons, keeping all the while a careful eye upon the fire, roaring up the wide-throated chimney.

The tap room itself had an air of Christmas cheer; wreaths of English holly and ivy made the wall gay, and a huge spray of mistletoe hung above the door. Even the viands suggested the approach of Christmas, for mine host of The Falcon had provided a roast pig for the entertainment of the players, knowing that on Christmas day they were to dine elsewhere; and when the platter appeared, dressed with holly and with a rosy apple in the pig's mouth, the company greeted it with the old song, "The Boar is dead, Lo here is his head," in a mighty chorus, Edmund joining in with all his might, for he knew the old song well. The feast ended with a great plum pudding, its flaming splendor borne aloft by the jolly innkeeper himself. "Here 's to mine host," called Diccon Burbage, who seemed always to act as master of ceremonies on these occasions, lifting his tankard as the pudding appeared:

> "Let 's drink to him in English ale —
> English ale that drives out thinking
> Prince of liquors, old or new."

"Sing it, Dick, sing it," cried the others; and as they drank the toast Burbage stood up and sang a verse of the rollicking old carol:

> "And now — by Christmas, jolly soul!
> By this mansion's generous sire!
> By the wine and by the bowl,
> And all the joys they both inspire!
> Here I 'll drink a health to all,
> The glorious task shall first be mine
> And ever may foul luck befall
> Him that to pledge me shall decline."

And then, "Hail Father Christmas; hail to thee!" rose the chorus, the whole company taking up the refrain.

Mine host was visibly flattered by this tribute to his good cheer, and beamed delightedly upon the company.

"Aye, ye may well praise the liquor," he said; "'t is the best of its kind; and as for the capon and roast pig, thou 'lt get no better at the Queen's own table."

"We 'll prove thy words to-morrow night," shouted Phillips, "for to-morrow we dine at Greenwich Palace; an' they have better ale than thine, upon mine honour as a knave, I 'll agree to drink it!"

It was late when the merry players left the hospitable Falcon, and Edmund was so tired that he stumbled sleepily along the streets beside Will and Dick Burbage, whose path lay in the same direction. As they parted at the door of the Tabard Inn, Burbage pinched Edmund's cheek and said, "To-morrow morning, fledgling, we shall see thy first flight. Be ready for rehearsal at ten; for at noon, as soon as we have had a bite to eat, we start for Greenwich to see the Queen. How dost thou like the life of a player, lad? Art in a hurry to return to Stratford?"

"Nay," said Edmund, leaning against Will, "I 'm not wishing for Stratford. A player's life is the life for me, and when I 'm grown I mean to be one like Will." "There 's never another like Will," said Burbage, laughing; "but an actor thou canst be, nevertheless, and so good-night."

The next morning Edmund awoke to the tune of "Hey, Robin, jolly Robin," which Will was gaily singing as he packed a hamper of clothes for Greenwich. He at once sprang out of bed, and dressed in a hurry in order to be ready for the rehearsal, though his knees smote together at the thought of it. When at last he stepped out of the tiring room of the Theatre, and stood, with Will beside him, waiting for his cue, he would have given his whole London experience to be in the safe obscurity of Stratford once more. The actor's life, which had seemed

so charming the night before, suddenly appeared to be full of hard work and possible mortifications, and he came very near a real case of stage fright. Will, knowing the symptoms, laughed at him kindly, and said, "Thou art the very pattern of a fairy in looks, my boy, and thou art sure of thy lines, and canst sing like a bird, so have no fear. Thy knees will be stiff enough when the time comes to act thy part, for thou art a true English lad, and afraid of nothing. Come, peep thro' this crack and see Theseus and Hyppolita come on the stage. Doth not the lad make a fine Amazon?" What boy could resist an opportunity like that? Edmund flew to the crack, and soon forgot all else in the movement and fun of the play. He chuckled with delight at the merry antics of Phillips as Bottom, and was so much in the spirit of the midsummer night madness that when his own cue came he skipped lightly out upon the stage, and sung his song with an abandon that surprised even himself. "Why, I 'm not scared at all," he told himself joyfully. Will met him as he came behind the scenes again, and laughed at him. "Where is thy fright now?" he said, playfully, pinching Edmund's cheek. "Thou wert as self-possessed as a veteran! Well done!"

At noon, after a hasty lunch, the whole company assembled at Paul's wharf, warmly dressed for a cold ride on the river. There they were met by a small fleet of wherries and stowed away comfortably in them. Edmund was in the boat with his brother, and Will pointed out to him the sights of London as they slipped along. London bridge grew gray in the distance behind them, and the Tower looked smaller and smaller as the rowers bent to their oars; the houses became more scattered, and finally they were quite beyond the walls of London and out in the open country. In the late afternoon they saw before them the Towers of Greenwich Palace rising above the trees in the distance; another mile or two and

the tired oarsmen deftly steered their boats against the piling and timbers which made a wide landing place at the river edge, and the players climbed stiffly ashore. The villagers had come down through the straggling streets of Greenwich to greet them, and the Queen had sent her own yeomen of the guard — great fellows dressed in red, with golden Tudor roses embroidered on their breasts and backs — to escort them to the Palace. They made a brave procession as they moved up the narrow village streets with banners flying, and Edmund, walking with Will, felt as proud as a prince as he looked at the town boys and remembered the time when he too had run beside the procession of players — admiring them as these little boys now admired and envied him. He began to feel again that the player's life was the finest in the world, and when he sat down in the Queen's own palace to such a dinner as he had never dreamed of in his life, served by pages in magnificent apparel, upon tables of such rich workmanship that a single one meant more wealth than any one in Stratford could boast, he could not believe that he, Edmund Shakespeare, was himself at all. "It is nothing short of enchantment," he whispered to himself.

The Queen had been born at Greenwich and loved it best of all her palaces. Here she surrounded herself with such splendour that foreign visitors must perforce be almost blinded by her magnificence. The walls were hung with the costliest silks embroidered in gold and precious stones and with rich tapestries and cloths of gold and silver. The throne itself in the audience room was ablaze with precious stones, and over it hung a velvet canopy with "vivat Regina Elizabetha" embroidered upon it in pearls. Elizabeth well knew the value of the splendours of royalty. Modesty and humility have no place among regal virtues, and the Queen set her subjects the example of immense respect for the person of royalty. Her

palace was fitted with gorgeously appareled guards, ushers, and noblemen and noble women in waiting, and no matter how proud their birth or station a smile from the Queen was to all of them the greatest reward to be received in the world. Edmund made good use of his eyes as he left the great dining hall with the other players and was conducted through magnificent corridors and apartments to the great hall where on the morrow the play was to be given. Here in a spacious room lighted by a thousand candles they prepared for the play, arranging the simple stage setting, examining the magnificent embroidered curtain which the Queen had provided for use at the back of the stage, and conducting a final rehearsal in order to be sure that each actor knew his own place in his new surroundings. It was quite eleven o'clock when their work was finally done and the tired actors followed the ushers to the apartments reserved for them for the night.

When at last Edmund had a chance to sleep it mattered little to him whether it was in the Palace of the Queen or in his own bed at Stratford, for he knew nothing of the splendour about him until he opened his eyes on Christmas morning.

It was barely dawn when he was awakened by a great noise of shouts, wild songs, jingling bells and the sound of many feet clattering upon the stones of the Court yard. He sprang to the casement and looked down, knowing quite well what he should see, for the Christmas merriments were of the same rough character throughout England, and he, himself, with the other boys of Stratford, had more than once been followers in the train of his highness, the Lord of Misrule. There was his majesty in the court yard of the Queen, surrounded by a crowd of followers fantastically clad in liveries of green, yellow, and scarlet, with strings of bells around about their legs which jingled as they walked or capered about

in the Morris dance. Some rode upon hobby horses, others made wild music for the dancers upon pipes and drums and all acted like the veriest mad men on a holiday. This pandemonium continued until the Queen's servants appeared among them with Christmas gifts from the Queen, of meat, cheese, cakes, and ale, which were eagerly seized and as eagerly devoured by the mummers. After they had gone Edmund lay down once more upon his bed, for it was still too early to get up, and besides he did not know where he might be permitted to go in the Palace, and as he lay half asleep in the conscious luxury of his warm, soft bed, a very different sound reached his ear — the Waits, chanting Christmas hymns in celebration of the Saviour's birth. What a day it was for Edmund, full of sights, strange and magnificent, and of Christmas cheer at the table of the Queen! Her majesty had given special commands for the entertainment of the players, and their Christmas dinner was even more splendid than the banquet of the night before. Edmund's head whirled with the crowding events and he feared he should not be able to remember all that happened to tell to the boys of Stratford, among whom he saw himself a hero for this experience.

At last the hour arrived for the performance. The actors were ready behind the scenes, the hall was alight with so many candles that it made Edmund think of the sky on a starry night. He stood with Will in the dim light behind the curtain, peeping through a fold at the splendour beyond. From this point of vantage he gazed across the stage which projected into the room and saw a great company of the noblest men and women of England dressed with such dazzling brilliancy that it seemed to him that splendour could go no farther. "Wait until you see the Queen," whispered Will; "she does not permit herself to be outshone. She will appear among the others like the moon in the milky way." Edmund won-

dered how that could be, for the room was gay with rich brocades and brilliant embroidery with gold lace and flashing gems, the men being no less splendid than the women. "Gaze thy fill," whispered Will, "for never again in thy life wilt thou see such an assemblage of lords and ladies! See yonder the foreign ambassadors, with their suites, and there talking to my Lord of Burleigh is Sir Walter Raleigh himself! He is a prime favourite with the Queen, for he has made her rich in lands beyond the seas."

A flourish of trumpets sounded in the distance, silence swept over the gay assemblage, a voice in the corridor was heard calling, "Way here, way here," and the lords and ladies parted, leaving a wide open aisle in the centre of the room. In the doorway appeared the Queen's Master of Revels, in magnificent apparel, attended by pages in livery of white and gold. After them came the maids of honour, with the noblemen in immediate attendance upon the Queen, a gorgeous company, and then the Queen herself, walking proudly alone, acknowledging the deep reverences of the Court with a manner haughty yet not disdainful, and speaking to one and another as she progressed.

Edmund's knees shook with excitement. He seized Will's hand and found it cold. "Thou art frightened too, Will, I verily believe," he gasped. "How shall I ever play before her! She is indeed like the moon in the Milky Way, and as learned as she is grand. Dost see her speak to the foreigners — to each in a different tongue? And her crown! The light of it blinds me! And her gown embroidered with pearls! Look at her ruff and the mantle streaming behind her like the trail of a comet! Oh, Will, Will, what am I that I should sing before the Queen!" At that moment Elizabeth took her place on a raised dais near the stage, the maids of honour grouped themselves about her, and there was a subdued

ripple of excitement behind the curtain as Burbage went about for a final survey of the players who waited breathlessly for the signal to begin the play. In the hush of this instant Will seized Edmund by the shoulders and shook him lightly. "Queen or no Queen," he whispered sternly, "thou art here to play thy part. Wouldst like to go back to Stratford and tell the boys thou wert afraid of aught? Thou 'lt do thy best, and thy best is well enough, so no more whimpering, but watch well for thy cue." Edmund manfully swallowed the lump in his throat and took a fresh grip upon his courage. A flourish of trumpets sounded, and Will ready in his cloak of black velvet parted the curtain with a quick movement and stepped forth upon the stage to recite the prologue written for the occasion. A murmur ran through the house. "It is Will Shakespeare, who hath written the play," and the Queen herself welcomed him with a smile. Edmund listened to the familiar voice, rich, full, and modulated, giving the lines of the prologue, and a moment later caught a flying glimpse of Will as he reappeared behind the curtain and fled to the tiring room to dress for his part in the play. Once more the curtain parted. Enter Thescus and Hyppolita — the play is begun!

Edmund felt his heart come up in his throat. Titania Oberon and Puck took their places to be ready the moment their cue sounded, and in the fairy train stood Edmund, the smallest of them all, his eyes shining and his cheeks glowing with excitement.

The first act ended triumphantly, Puck and the first fairy opened the Second with their merry meeting, and at last the great moment came! Edmund himself slipped through the entrance and found himself in a blaze of light flitting gaily about Titania in the middle of the stage, forgetting everything but his part and his desire not to disappoint the big brother for whose good opinion he so much cared.

Will's eyes were upon him he knew, but what he did not know was that a murmur of admiration ran about the room as he sang "Weaving Spiders come not hence," in his sweet boy's voice, making at the same time so fair a picture that the Queen herself deigned to ask his name. "A young brother of Will Shakespeare's," whispered some one, and the Queen, listening, murmured, "A well-favoured lad, with the voice of a thrush and brother to a poet. We must remember him."

Another moment and they were once more behind the scenes, and Edmund, caught in Will's embrace heard him say, "Bravo, my lad! Sometime thou shalt stay in London with thy brother Will and be an actor indeed. It is in thy blood and I am proud of thee!" Will was proud of him — of him — Edmund Shakespeare! He paused to consider it. At the moment Burbage flew by, stopping just long enough to smite Will joyfully on the shoulder and to say in a whisper, "Ah, Will, thou art the fisherman for trout that must be caught with tickling! Did'st see the Queen's face when Oberon made his speech? And as for thee, youngster," he added, turning to Edmund, "thou art the pattern of a fairy and worthy thy name!" Had the world more to offer? To Edmund the rest of the evening passed in a happy bewilderment.

He heard as in a dream the burst of laughter and applause from the audience. Once he even heard a ripple of laughter from the Queen herself, when Peter Quince said to Bottom in the asses head, "Bless thee, thou art translated!" The evident delight of the hearers inspired the actors with new spirit, and they played their parts with such abandon and fire that both actors and audience were carried away in a gale of infectious merriment, each new antic of Phillips, as Bottom, or of Puck, provoking such outbursts of laughter that sometimes the lines could scarcely be finished for the noise. At last it was all over. Puck had finished his epilogue and the whole company

gathered behind the curtain once more gave themselves up to unmixed joy. "As I prophesied, Will," said Burbage, seizing Will and hugging him before them all, "thy wit hath made our fortunes. If we had but the space to do it in we would carry thee on our shoulders. As it is, — but hist, — here comes Master Tylney." Burbage stepped forward, bowing profoundly as the Master of Revels appeared, gorgeous in gold lace and further ornamented with a smile so broad that it was evident he took upon himself full credit for having supplied her majesty with so good an entertainment. "Hey, Master Burbage," he said pompously, "thou hast so delighted the Queen with thy play that she desires to see thee and Master Shakespeare and all thy company. Follow me!" He turned, beckoning them with a majestic wave of his arm, and strutted forth like a turkey cock at the head of his flock. Phillips, the moment his back was turned, fell in behind him, imitating his important manner so faithfully that the younger members of the company tittered, and Burbage, grinning himself, was obliged to seize him summarily by the collar and send him whirling to the rear, while he, with Will, headed the little procession in the wake of the Master of Revels.

Edmund fell in with the other fairies in the train of Titania and found himself a moment later almost blinded by the bright lights of the room, and further dazzled by his nearer view of beautiful ladies and richly dressed gentlemen of the Court, who stood about talking together and watching curiously the group of actors as they passed by.

Another instant and they stood in the Presence. The Queen surrounded by her maids was still seated upon her dais and when Edmund first caught sight of her she was gaily bandying words with the Lord Chamberlain, the patron of their company. As Burbage and Shakespeare knelt before her she smiled upon them, and as a special

mark of favor gave them her hand to kiss. "Thou hast bewitched another Queen than Titania by thine enchantments," she said. "For thine excellent play receive my thanks, and from the hands of Master Tylney a gift besides to each one in the company, and for thee," she added, beckoning to Edmund who was shrinking behind the others, "this golden Tudor rose, because thou art the smallest of players and thy name is Shakespeare, and because thou hast pleased the Queen." Edmund thrust forward by the others, when the Queen beckoned him, had fallen upon his knees, a grateful provision of etiquette, for they were shaking beneath him alarmingly. Something seemed to fill his throat and he could find no words to thank her as he received the trinket from her hand. She noted his embarrassment, patted him kindly on the head, and said reassuringly, "Thy thanks are written in thine eyes, there is no need for words," and with a smile and nod concluded the audience, dismissing the players to the care of her Master of Revels. Edmund went out with the others his eyes shining, his cheeks red with excitement, and the golden rose fastened proudly upon his breast. When they were once more in safe seclusion of their room, he threw himself upon Will's neck in an excess of joy. "Oh, Will, Will," he said, "what I shall have to tell to mother and Anne and the girls, of thee and thy life in London, and how the Queen herself honoured me because I but bore the same name with thee! Didst thou really mean it when thou saidst I should sometime stay with thee in London, and be a player, too?" "I meant it truly," answered Will, "but first thou must stay longer in school and study thy books, for thou art but small for thy years and not strong enough to bear the actor's life as yet. When thou art a little older! There is plenty of time."

And with this assurance Edmund was well content. It was a happy boy that slept at Greenwich Palace that

night and returned to London next day. When later he met old Greenway before Gilbert's door to set forth once more for Stratford town the jovial old carrier wondered at the change that one short week had made in his favourite. "Thou art not the same Edmund," he sighed, "I would not believe that a week could so transform thee. What has come over thee, child?" "I have seen the Queen, Master Greenway," said Edmund, with dignity, "and she gave me a golden rose, and sometime I am to be an actor like Will. I shall not live always in Stratford, but I shall always love thee for bringing me to London." Old Greenway whistled. "So that way lies the wind," said he, cracking his whip. "'T is time I took thee back to thy mother. Get up old gray," and the cart rumbled away toward the west, leaving Gilbert gazing after them from the doorway of his shop.

A Midsummer
Night's Dream

A Midsummer-Night's Dream

ACT FIRST—SCENE I—ATHENS

THE PALACE OF THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, *and* Attendants

THE. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

HIP. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THE. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS

EGE. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!
THE. Thanks, good Egeus: what 's the news with thee?
EGE. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning[1] voice, verses of feigning love;
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers

[1] Loving or yearning voice.

Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

THE. What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
One that composed your beauties; yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HER. So is Lysander.

THE. In himself he is;
But in this kind,[1] wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

HER. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THE. Rather your eyes must with his judgement look

HER. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,

[1] In business of this nature.

Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THE. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun;
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HER. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THE. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon, —
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship, —

Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

DEM. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYS. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGE. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYS. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

THE. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;

But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up, —
Which by no means we may extenuate, —
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGE. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*

LYS. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HER. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYS. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood, —

HER. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYS. Or else misgraffed[1] in respect of years, —

[1] Ill grafted.

LYSANDER AND HERMIA

LYSANDER — How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?

Act I, Scene i

HER. O spite! too old to be engaged to young.
LYS. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends, —
HER. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.
LYS. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentany [1] as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied [2] night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.
HER. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.
LYS. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;

[1] The same as momentary.
[2] Black.

And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,[1]
There will I stay for thee.

HER. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYS. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HER. God speed fair Helena! whither away?

HEL. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air

[1] The celebration of May-day is a custom dating from the earliest times.

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I 'ld give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HER. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HEL. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HER. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HEL. O that my prayers could such affection move!

HER. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HEL. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HER. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HEL. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

HER. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

LYS. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

To-morrow night, when Phœbe[1] doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HER. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

LYS. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Herm.*
Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*

HEL. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:

[1] The moon.

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,[1]
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit.*

SCENE II — THE SAME

QUINCE'S HOUSE

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

QUIN. Is all our company here?

BOT. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

[1] Eyes.

QUIN. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOT. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

QUIN. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOT. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

QUIN. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOT. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUIN. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOT. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUIN. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOT. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in,[1] to make all split.

[1] To rant violently.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
  Of prison-gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
  The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

QUIN. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLU. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLU. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUIN. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLU. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUIN. That 's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOT. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I 'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne;" "Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!"

QUIN. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOT. Well, proceed.

QUIN. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STAR. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince.

QUIN. You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father: Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUIN. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOT. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

QUIN. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL. That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOT. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 't were any nightingale.

QUIN. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely,

BOTTOM AND THE PLAYERS

BOTTOM—Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will make the duke say, "Let him roar again."

Act I, Scene ii

gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown colour beard, your perfect yellow.

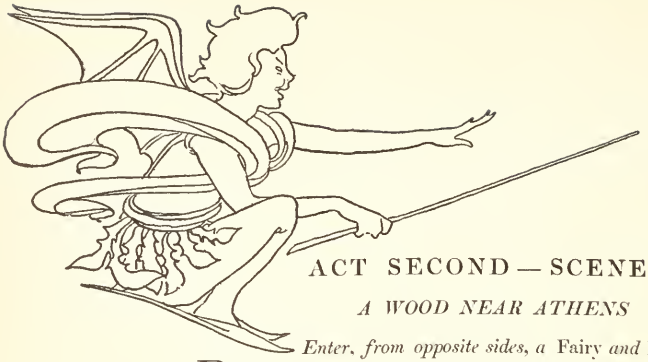
Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely[1] and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt.*

[1] An ignorant blunder for "seemly."



ACT SECOND — SCENE I

A WOOD NEAR ATHENS

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy *and* Puck

PUCK. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

FAI. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs[1] upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

[1] The "orbs" are the circles supposed to be made by fairies on the ground and keep green by their care.

PUCK AND THE FAIRY

PUCK — How now, spirit! whither wander you?
FAIRY — Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier.

Act II, Scene i

Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I 'll be gone:
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

PUCK. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:[1]
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

FAI. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,

[1] There was a common superstition that fairies stole away beautiful children, leaving elves in their places.

You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

PUCK. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,[1]
In very likeness of a roasted crab;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh;
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

FAI. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON, *with his train; from the other,* TITANIA, *with hers*

OBE. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITA. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

[1] A christening cup.

OBE. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?
TITA. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.
OBE. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?
TITA. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea

Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Have every pelting river made so proud,
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris [1] is fill'd up with mud;
And the quaint mazes [2] in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change

[1] A game played on three squares cut in the turf. These squares become filled with mud.

[2] Complicated labyrinthine figures, which boys traced upon the grass.

Their wonted liveries ; and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which :
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension ;
We are their parents and original.

OBE. Do you amend it, then ; it lies in you :
Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

TITA. Set your heart at rest :
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order :
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side ;
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood ;
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die ;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy ;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBE. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

TITA. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us ;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBE. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITA. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit Titania with her Train.*

OBE. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid,[1] on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK. I remember.

OBE. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress[2] passed on,

[1] Supposed by some to refer to Mary, Queen of Scots, the rival of Queen Elizabeth.

[2] The "imperial votaress" is Queen Elizabeth.

In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.[1]
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK. I 'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit.*

OBE. Having once this juice,
I 'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
I 'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

[1] A name for the pansy.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him*

DEM. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I 'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and wode[1] within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HEL. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEM. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not nor I cannot love you?

HEL. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love, —
And yet a place of high respect with me, —
Than to be used as you use your dog?

DEM. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

[1] Angry, enraged.

HEL. And I am sick when I look not on you.
DEM. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place
With the rich worth of your virginity.
HEL. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?
DEM. I 'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.
HEL. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies.
DEM. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.
HEL. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!

Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.
[*Exit Dem.*
I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*

OBE. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK. Ay, there it is.

OBE. I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man

By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

PUCK. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

Enter TITANIA, *with her train*

TITA. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;
Some war with rere-mice [1] for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats; and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG

Fir. Fairy. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:

[1] Bats.

Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Fir. Fairy. Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody, &c.

SEC. FAIRY. Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

Enter OBERON, *and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids*

OBE. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA

LYS. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:

We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.
HER. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.
LYS. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.
HER. Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
LYS. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it:
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
HER. Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!
LYS. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;

And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HER. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd! [*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK

PUCK. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence. — Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit.*

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA, *running*

HEL. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEM. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

HEL. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

DEM. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit.*

HELENA AND DEMETRIUS

HELENA — Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Act II, Scene ii

HEL. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.
LYS. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shews art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
HEL. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.
LYS. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.

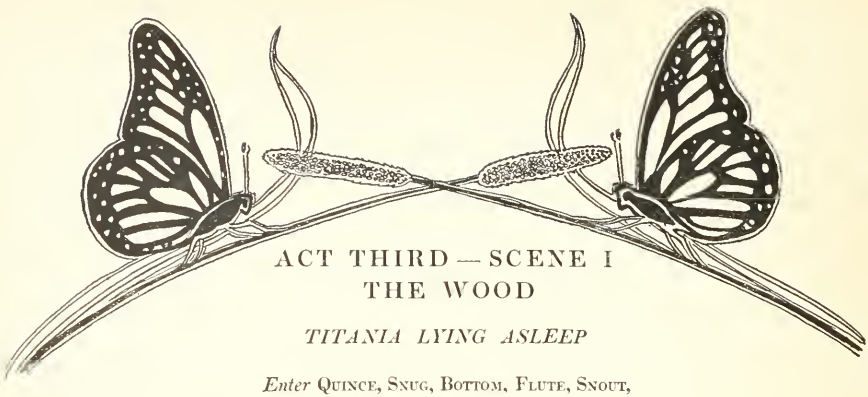
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes; where I o'erlook
Love's stories, written in love's richest book.

HEL. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refused,
Should of another therefore be abused! [*Exit.*

LYS. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave

Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight! [*Exit.*

HER. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear:
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I'll find immediately. [*Exit.*



ACT THIRD — SCENE I
THE WOOD

TITANIA LYING ASLEEP

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

BOT. Are we all met?

QUIN. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

BOT. Peter Quince, —

QUIN. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

BOT. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNOUT. By 'r lakin,[1] a parlous[2] fear.

STAR. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOT. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well.

[1] By our ladykin, — an oath referring to the Virgin.

[2] Perilous.

Write me a prologue ; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed ; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver : this will put them out of fear.

QUIN. Well, we will have such a prologue ; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOT. No, make it two more ; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion ?

STAR. I fear it, I promise you.

BOT. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves : to bring in, — God shield us ! — a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing ; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living : and we ought to look to 't.

SNOUT. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOT. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck ; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — " Ladies," — or, " Fair ladies, — I would wish you," — or, " I would request you," — or, " I would entreat you, — not to fear, not to tremble : my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life : no, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men are : " and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

QUIN. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOT. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUIN. Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOT. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUIN. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

BOT. Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUIN. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech,

enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter Puck *behind*

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I 'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Bot. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet, —

Quin. Odours, odours.

Bot. —— odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here. [*Exit.*

Flu. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

Flu. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I 'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. "Ninus' tomb," man: why, you must not speak

that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, "never tire."

FLU. O, — As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head*

BOT. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUIN. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

PUCK. I 'll follow you, I 'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I 'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit.*

BOT. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT

SNOUT. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

BOT. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit Snout.*

Re-enter QUINCE

QUIN. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit.*

BOTTOM WITH AN ASS'S HEAD

QUINCE — *Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.*

Act III, Scene i

BOT. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*

The ousel cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill;[1]

TITA. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOT. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay; —

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry "cuckoo" never so?

TITA. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOT. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason

[1] Musical pipe.

for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity, that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek[1] upon occasion.

TITA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOT. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITA. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I 'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep:
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARDSEED

FIRST FAI. Ready.
SEC. FAI. And I.
THIRD FAI. And I.
FOURTH FAI. And I.
ALL. Where shall we go?
TITA. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;

[1] Jest.

TITANIA

TITANIA [Awakening]— What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Act III, Scene i

Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

First Fai. Hail, mortal!

Sec. Fai. Hail!

Third Fai. Hail!

Fourth Fai. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your pa-

tience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITA. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD

Enter OBERON

OBE. I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule[1] now about this haunted grove?

PUCK. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,

[1] Night revelry.

Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

OBE. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK. I took him sleeping, — that is finish'd too, —

And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA *and* DEMETRIUS

OBE. Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

PUCK. This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEM. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HER. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEM. So should the murder'd look; and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HER. What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEM. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HER. Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEM. You spend your passion on a misprised mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

HER. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEM. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

HER. A privilege, never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit.*

DEM. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

OBE. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBE. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I 'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit.*

OBE. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,

Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBE. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befal preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER *and* HELENA

LYS. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HEL. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.

LYS. I had no judgement when to her I swore.

HEL. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

LYS. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

DEM. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

HEL. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

HELENA, DEMETRIUS, AND LYSANDER

HELENA — O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment. Act III, Scene ii

LYS. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love, and will do till my death.

HEL. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEM. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

LYS. Helen, it is not so.

DEM. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA

HER. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompence.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYS. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HER. What love could press Lysander from my side?
LYS. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes[1] and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?
HER. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.
HEL. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, — O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,

[1] Circles of fire, stars.

But yet an union in partition ;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem ;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart ;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend ?
It is not friendly, 't is not maidenly :
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

HER. I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not : it seems that you scorn me.

HEL. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face ?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial ? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates ? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent ?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved ?
This you should pity rather than despise.

HER. I understand not what you mean by this.

HEL. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 't is partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYS. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HEL. O excellent!

HER. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEM. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYS. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEM. I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYS. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEM. Quick, come!

HER. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYS. Away, you Ethiope!

DEM. No, no; he 'll . . .
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

LYS. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!
HER. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
Sweet love, —
LYS. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!
HER. Do you not jest?
HEL. Yes, sooth; and so do you.
LYS. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.
DEM. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I 'll not trust your word.
LYS. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I 'll not harm her so.
HER. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me, — O, the gods forbid! —
In earnest, shall I say?
LYS. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.

Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

HER. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

HEL. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HER. Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HEL. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,

Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HER. Lower! hark, again.

HEL. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

HER. Why, get you gone: who is 't that hinders you?

HEL. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HER. What, with Lysander?

HEL. With Demetrius.

LYS. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEM. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HEL. O, when she 's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HER. Little again! nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

LYS. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

DEM. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

LYS. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEM. Follow! nay, I 'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*

HER. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.

HEL. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*

HER. I am amazed, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*

OBE. This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,

That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

OBE. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray,
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision;
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I 'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

OBE. But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the morning's love have oft made sport;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit.*

PUCK. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYS. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

PUCK. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYS. I will be with thee straight.

LYSANDER SEEKS DEMETRIUS

LYSANDER — Where art thou, proud Demetrius?

Act III, Scene ii

PUCK. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEM. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I 'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled
That draws a sword on thee.

DEM. Yea, art thou there?

PUCK. Follow my voice: we 'll try no manhood here.
[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYS. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I 'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.*

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS

PUCK. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEM. Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

PUCK. Come hither: I am here.

DEM. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Re-enter HELENA

HEL. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

PUCK. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

HERMIA

HERMIA — Never so weary, never so in woe;
Bedabbled with dew, and torn with briers;
I can no further crawl, no further go.

Act III, Scene ii

Re-enter HERMIA

HER. Never so weary, never so in woe;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

PUCK. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I 'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

[*Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eye.*

When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit.*

ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—THE SAME

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, AND HERMIA, LYING ASLEEP

Enter TITANIA *and* BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARD-SEED, *and other* Fairies *attending;* OBERON *behind unseen*

TIT. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,[1]
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOT. Where 's Peaseblossom?

PEAS. Ready.

BOT. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where 's Mounsieur Cobweb?

COB. Ready.

BOT. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loth

[1] Caress.

to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf,[1] Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

Mus. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms. Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt Fairies.*

[1] Fist or hand.

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*

Enter Puck

Obe. [*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;

TITANIA AND BOTTOM

TITANIA — Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Act IV, Scene i

That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITA. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBE. There lies your love.

TITA. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBE. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

TITA. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!

[*Music, still.*

PUCK. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

OBE. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK. Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

OBE. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

TITA. Come, my lord; and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night,
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground. [*Exeunt.*

[*Horns winded within.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and train*

THE. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an attend.*
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

HIP. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THE. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

EGE. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

THE. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGE. It is, my lord.

THE. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns. [*Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem., Hel., and Her., wake and start up.*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYS. Pardon, my lord.

THE. I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

LYS. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think, — for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is, —
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law.

EGE. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEM. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;

And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power, —
But by some power it is, — my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

THE. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens! three and three,
We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train.*

DEM. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

HER. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

HEL. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEM. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HER. Yea; and my father.

HEL. And Hippolyta.

LYS. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEM. Why, then, we are awake: let 's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*

BOT. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, "Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God 's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, — and methought I had, — but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen,

man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit.*

SCENE II — ATHENS

QUINCE'S HOUSE

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

QUIN. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

STAR. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

FLU. If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

QUIN. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLU. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUIN. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLU. You must say "paragon": a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG

SNUG. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLU. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have scaped sixpence a day: an the Duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM

BOT. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

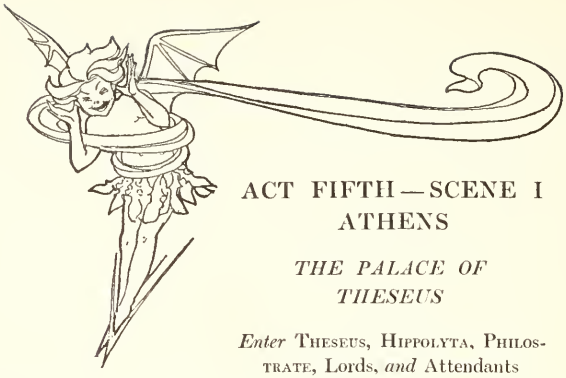
QUIN. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOT. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

QUIN. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOT. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for

they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go away! [*Exeunt.*



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I
ATHENS

THE PALACE OF THESEUS

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, *and* Attendants

HIP. 'T is strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

THE. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:[1]
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

[1] The brow of a gypsy. Gypsy is a corruption of "Egyptians."

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

HIP. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

THE. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

LYS. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THE. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

PHIL. Here, mighty Theseus.

THE. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHIL. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*

THE. [*reads*] The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.
We 'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
[*Reads*] The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.
That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.
[*Reads*] The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.
[*Reads*] A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHIL. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THE. What are they that do play it?

PHIL. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THE. And we will hear it.

PHIL. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THE. I will hear that play;
For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[*Exit Philostrate.*

HIP. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
And duty in his service perishing.

THE. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIP. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THE. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practised accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE

PHIL. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THE. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter QUINCE *for the* Prologue

PRO. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider, then, we come but in despite.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand; and, by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know.

THE. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYS. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIP. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THE. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION

PRO. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*

THE. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEM. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

WALL. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:

And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THE. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEM. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

THE. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Re-enter PYRAMUS

PYR. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
[*Wall holds up his fingers.*
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THE. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

PYR. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Re-enter THISBE

THIS. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYR. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

THIS. My love thou art, my love I think.

PYR. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

THIS. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYR. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THIS. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYR. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THIS. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYR. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THIS. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

WALL. Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus wall away doth go. [*Exit.*

THE. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEM. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIP. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THE. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

PYRAMUS AND THISBE

PYRAMUS — Now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

Act V, Scene i

HIP. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THE. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Re-enter LION *and* MOONSHINE

LION. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity on my life.

THE. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEM. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYS. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THE. True; and a goose for his discretion.

DEM. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

THE. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

MOON. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present; —

DEM. He should have worn the horns on his head.

THE. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

MOON. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THE. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i' the moon?

DEM. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIP. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

THE. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYS. Proceed, Moon.

MOON. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man i' the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEM. Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Re-enter THISBE

THIS. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

LION. [*Roaring*] Oh —— [*Thisbe runs off.*

DEM. Well roared, Lion.

THE. Well run, Thisbe.

HIP. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*

THE. Well moused, Lion.

DEM. And then came Pyramus.

LYS. And so the lion vanished.

Re-enter PYRAMUS

PYR. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THE. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIP. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

PYR. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear :
Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound ;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus ;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop : [*Stabs himself.*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled ;
My soul is in the sky :
Tongue, lose thy light ;
Moon, take thy flight : [*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

DEM. No die, but an ace, for him ; for he is but one.

LYS. Less than an ace, man ; for he is dead ; he is nothing.

THE. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

HIP. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover ?

THE. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes ; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE

HIP. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus : I hope she will be brief.

DEM. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYS. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEM. And thus she means, videlicet: —

THIS. Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk:
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself.*
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*

THE. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEM. Ay, and Wall too.

BOT. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THE. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 't is almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK

PUCK. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.

Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night,
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,[1]
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA *with their train*

OBE. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire:
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.
TITA. First, rehearse your song by rote,

[1] The fairies were supposed to be very clean and to help maids in the work of the house and to sweep the house at night.

To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance.*

OBE. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace,
Ever shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.*

PUCK. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call:
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands,[1] if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*

[1] Give a round of applause.